(c) since when, the new service has been started and the States covered thereunder;

(d) whether Government have received any feedback as to the utility of the service and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether the E-Post Service is likely to be extended to the rest of the country and if so, by when ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Department of Posts has launched a new service called e-Post on a pilot basis.

(b) and (c) The e-Post service allows members of the public to send e-mail to persons who do not have PC/Internet facility. e-Post service was started as a pilot project on 2nd August, 2001 in the five States of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Goa for a period of six months, 203 post offices have been identified where messages sent from any part of the world could be received, printed and delivered by postman. Members of the public in these five States can also send e-Post/e-mail by booking them at these e-Post centres to any recipient either in India or aboard.

(d) e-Post is available on the dedicated website www.indianpostoffice.net. The website has attracted considerable public interest with an average of 25,000 visits at the website per day. So far more than 2,500 people have registered for this service.

(e) The e-Post pilot project shall be reviewed and depending on the result of review, a decision as to its extension to the rest of the country will be taken.

VSNL entry into National Long Distance Telephones

2597. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that VSNL is planning to enter into the National Long Distance Communication System (NLD) and if so, by when it is likely to be made operational;

(b) whether the tariff would be competitive as compared to the existing tariffs of the BSNL;

(c) whether the existing customers of the VSNL network would be able to utilise its services of VSNL in the NLD telephone system; and

(d) what would be the investment in this new upcoming project by VSNL ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) Yes, Sir. By middle of 2002.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Existing customers of BSNL network will be able to utilise the services of VSNL in the NLD telephone system depending upon the final decision about selection of NLD operator by customers.

(d) About Rs. 1800 crores.

Call traffic through PSTN switches

2598. SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether, as reported in Statesman of June 23, 2000, Government have been contemplating a move to allow call traffic through PSTN switches on capacity, leased out to private parties, whereby consumers could be benefited from considerably cheaper tariffs; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal and what decision has been taken in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) and (b) The news-item referred here appeared in the Statesman dated June 23, 2001. As per the recommendations of TRAI in respect of opening of International Long Distance Service to private sector, which has been accepted by the Government, re-sellers are not permitted.

Implementation of CPP

2599. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Hon'ble High Court have struck down the impugned regulations and implementation of Calling Party Pay (CPP) in the form prevalent at the time of hearing;